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THE CHARM OF GREEK TRAVEL

At Tibur, on the banks of the Anio, the travel-loving emperor Hadrian built a magnificent villa, a marvel of architectural display and landscape-gardening. He did this to perpetuate his memories of Greece. In one part he reconstructed the Lyceum where Aristotle had walked with his pupils, in another the groves of the Academy where Plato founded his school, the prototype of our universities. In still another he constructed a copy of the Prytaneum or *Hôtel de Ville* of Athens, which for centuries had stood on the north slope of the Acropolis, and the *Poikile* or Painted Colonnade with its mythological and historical paintings. He converted the '*praeceps Anio*' into a Thessalian Peneus rushing on in a series of cataracts through an ideal Vale of Tempe. And that nothing might be wanting, we are told by the emperor's biographer, Spartian, that he made a representation of gloomy Tartarus. But eighteen centuries have done their relentless work. To-day Tivoli, the site of Tibur, is only a vast and bewildering ruin of fragmentary walls and broken columns; it is difficult, even impossible, to identify many of the buildings and localities; and the traveller who has come to visit these melancholy ruins has little else than his imagination, assisted by his knowledge of antiquity, to help him fill in the picture.

A little later, in the age of the Antonines, a Greek named Pausanias, a native of Chæronea in Bœotia—the scene centuries before of the battle by which Philip of Macedon wrested from the Greeks their liberty—travelled over Greece and wrote down all that interested him. His book, the *Description of Greece*, the forerunner of all the Baedekers and Murrays of our day, has fortunately survived intact and is one of the most important aids which the archæologist to-day possesses. In Pausanias's day the cities of Greece were still centres of a vigorous life and culture, even if Helios had forever set on their glorious past. Every temple was a museum of art, every spot was hallowed by some tradition or historic association. But the traveller to Greece to-day, like the traveller to Tivoli, looks in vain for most of the things which interested the Roman visitor for whom Pausanias

wrote. The historic sites of the once populous towns, the battle-fields, the awe-inspiring shrines with their picturesque ruins, still speak to him out of those far-off days of greatness. But it is with mournful feelings that he contemplates the fragments of the once matchless art of Greece, the magnificent temples whose columned walls are now overgrown with the ivy of fancy, and those relics of her sculpture that he may view in the warehouse-like arrangements of European museums.

On first arriving from the richer galleries of Rome and Naples the traveller feels a keen disappointment on viewing the fragmentary remnants of that sculpture in the museums of Athens or Delphi. Soon, however, the superiority of their pristine freshness and beauty over the copies and adaptations found in Italian museums is sure to impress and then to console him. One glance at the lovely marble Hermes of Praxiteles at Olympia, at the graceful Charioteer in Delphi, or at the compelling sweetness of expression in the so-called Eubouleus head in Athens, will repay him for all the trouble and expense of continuing his journey eastward. What he has brought with him of appreciation of things beautiful will determine just how much he can reconstruct in his imagination. It will depend upon how much his mind is stored with the things of beauty and grace which made the Greeks unique and still make them the teachers of the modern world. For, unlike Italy or Spain, Greece offers little more to the visitor now than its rich classical lore and its beauties of nature. The one thing that has not changed in Greece in the lapse of centuries is its landscape, with its characteristic clearness of outline and beautiful effects of color. The now barren but nobly formed hills, the deep bays and the luminous atmosphere, still delight us as they did the Greeks in the days of Pericles. As the poet of *Childe Harold* puts it:—

“And yet how lovely is thy age of woe,
Land of lost gods, and godlike men art thou!
Thy vales of evergreen, thy hills of snow
Proclaim thee nature’s varied favorite now.”

And it is doubtful whether any country exists where the visual stimuli to the imagination are greater than here. A passage

descriptive of Greek scenery from Shairp's *Poetic Interpretation of Nature* will give an insight into the elements of its attraction:—

“Scenery so richly diversified, a land beyond all others various in features and elements, mountains with their bases plunged into the sea, valleys intersected by great rivers, rich plains and meadows inlaid between the hill-ranges, deeply indented shores, promontories, wood-clad or temple-crowned, looking out over the many-islanded Ægean; around it on every side seas so beautiful, above it a canopy of sky, changing through every hour and every season, and calling forth from sea and land every color which sunlight or gloom can elicit.”

Achilles, in his quarrel with Agamemnon in the *Iliad*, reminds the king of men that he did not join the expedition against Troy out of enmity to the Trojans, since they never had harried his oxen nor wasted his harvest in deep-soiled Phthia, the nurse of heroes,—

“For many a shadowy mount between us lies
And waters of the wide resounding sea.”

Thus unconsciously the poet brings together in these words the predominant physical characteristics of Greece—her mountains and her seas, the most powerful geographical factors to mould her genius and story. Similarly, Wordsworth in his *Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland*, dwells on the same spell of sea and mountain—the twin voices of liberty:—

“Two voices are there ; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains, each a mighty voice :
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty !”

Nowhere else are these two voices more intimately combined than in Greece. Everywhere the land is divided into isolated districts by the hills which shut off valley from valley and clan from clan. Thus Greece was predestined to be a land of separate and independent communities, where local patriotism would thrive and where there was little opportunity to foster larger ideas of national unity. But if hills sever, seas unite, and the “island-studded seas” penetrate far into the land on all

sides of Greece but one, rendering these isolated areas accessible to the outer world and thus early arousing a commercial activity, which tended to temper their narrowness by the greater breadth of view so characteristic of seafaring folk.

From the first, then, Greece was the nursery of mariners, and her whole literature reflects her familiarity with the sea. The epithets and descriptions of the sea which we meet in all her poets, from Homer on, show how the endless variety of surface and color appealed to the Hellenic imagination. Thus the Greeks were a race of both mountaineers and sailors—Greek civilization owing an equal debt to each. A Greek might pass his lifetime out of sight of the sea, but he never could escape from a view of his mountains. For everywhere the land is a constant alternation of hill and vale. Everywhere the valleys are enclosed by amphitheatres of hills. These hills are often symmetrically grouped, a feature that strikes every visitor to the country. To use a phrase of Sir Charles Fellowes, they are “poetically beautiful”. I think that no one has better expressed the poetry of their outlines and grouping than Professor Jebb, in his little book entitled *Modern Greece*:—

“But who shall describe the outlines of the Greek hills? The best thing that was ever said about them, to my thinking, was said by Thackeray. . . . He speaks of the Attic plain as surrounded by a ‘chorus of hills’. It is an image full of truth. The forms of these hills are at once so bold and so chastened, the onward sweep of their ranges is at once so elastic and so calm, each member of every group is at once so individual and so fully helpful to the ethereal expressiveness of the rest, that the harmony of their undulations and the cadences in which they fall combine the charm of sculpture with the life and variety of a sunlit sea . . . irresistibly suggesting the Hellenic image of a choral sisterhood, marshalled by the greater master of the scene to chant a sublime antiphonal of praise and thanksgiving for the goodliness of that wonderful land.”

Everywhere these graceful hills bound the horizon, their jagged lines sharply defined against the clear, bright sky. They stand like walls enclosing green valleys, or against the glistening expanse of sea. Often they are seen in less favorable conditions under

the stress of storm, when the clouds reach down and cover their summits. But even then they are not ugly. Their gray sides take on lowering shadows—but often the storm is gone almost as quickly as it came; anon the murky clouds begin to lighten and then, as if a mighty curtain had been withdrawn, everything sparkles again in the sunlight, lit up in all the tints of violet.

In the presence of such surroundings I have often wondered at the doubts cast by Ruskin and others on the ability of the old Greeks—the race of all others most keenly endowed with the sensitive appreciation of the beautiful—to feel admiration for their scenery, since descriptions of nature occur only incidentally in their literature. By such writers a fundamental distinction between the ancient and modern feeling for natural scenery has been drawn and the principle laid down that the love of nature is a feeling of very modern growth, in fact a development of northern romanticism. But such a distinction has been far too sharply drawn. We must, of course, admit that the wilder and more savage scenes did not arouse any such romantic interest in the ancients as they do in us. Admiration for the grand and sublime and elemental as we feel it, for instance, in our sentimental attitude toward mountain scenery, for the beauties of sterile cliffs and crags and desolate snow-fields, hardly existed among either the Greeks or the Romans. This feeling, we know, is a peculiarly modern contribution to æsthetics and did not come to full fruition until the last century, after the way had been pointed out by Rousseau and Gray. But we cannot deny that the Greeks, all through their history, from the time of Homer, felt an intimate sympathy with and love for their scenery, although their ideal was certainly found in the quieter and more harmonious aspects of nature. This is shown by the wealth of romantic interest which haunted every spot in their tiny land. Such a “columned promontory” as that of Cape Sunium, visible to everyone approaching Athens by sea, or such a foliage-embowered retreat as that in which Ægina’s temple ruins stand, or the unrivalled beauty of situation of the temple of Phigalia now as in antiquity in the midst of a forest of venerable oaks—these chosen sites are not without significance. The picturesque situation of many shrines and theatres also makes it impossible not

to believe that the Greeks were actuated by a very well-developed sense of natural beauty, even if, as I have already said, definite proofs of such a feeling are largely wanting in their literature. As Sir Gilbert Murray has truly remarked:—

“They [the Greeks] did not describe forests or mountains; they worshipped them and built temples in them. Their love for nature was that of the mountaineer and seaman, who does not talk much about sea or mountain, but sickens and pines if he is taken away from them.”

Many of the Greek hills have an individuality in their coloring which is very striking. Especially are the hues of the Attic hills which embosom Athens familiar to every visitor: the dark shadowy blue of Pentelicus, the soft mellowed brown of Parnes, the purple-violet tints of Hymettus. The effect of the last-named mountain, which encloses Athens on the east, is beautiful beyond description, and especially so in the evening. As the sun sets, a rosy flush overspreads it, which, as the night comes on, passes insensibly into the deepest violet. This tint, peculiar to this mountain alone, constantly meets the gaze in the soft air which bathes the ruined temples on the Acropolis. Long ago it aroused the enthusiasm of Pindar in this famous passage: “O thou renowned Athens, shining, violet-crowned and glorious; thou pride of Greece!” For here everything combines with an exquisite harmony to give Athens a most beautiful setting—the bright blue sky, the proximity of the sapphire sea “laughing in waves innumerable”, as Æschylus describes it, and the hills with their changing tints. But above all it is the luminous or “glistening” atmosphere sung by Pindar, Euripides and Aristophanes, making everything distinct and bright. For not only poetically with Euripides in the *Medea*, but literally also, the Athenians were “forever delicately treading through most pellucid air”. It was Cicero who, in trying to find an explanation of the remarkable mental acuity of the Athenians, referred it to the clearness of their skies. They became so fond of hearing their city called “violet-crowned” and “glistening” as to arouse the ridicule of Aristophanes, who in the *Acharnians* said that a stranger who flattered them by calling them by the latter

epithet could get anything he wanted, thanks to his "glistening", by assigning to them the honor more rightly due to sardines. The effect of the sun "gleaming with flashing splendor"—as Sophocles terms it in the *Trachiniae*—through the luminous air, is, of course, unknown to us of more northern climes. In fact, the beauties of an Athenian sunset are unparalleled with us, and have been the subject of many an eulogy. Thus Dean Stanley wrote of "the flood of fire in which the marble columns, the mountains, and the sea are all bathed and penetrated", and of "the violet hue which Hymettus assumes in the evening sky, in contrast to the glowing furnace of the rock of Lycabettus and the rosy pyramid of Pentelicus". And the lines from the third canto of Byron's *Corsair* about the sun setting along Morea's hills "in one unclouded blaze of living light" are known to every English reader. In such a luminous atmosphere not only the hills of Attica, but all the hills of Greece, rest like clear-cut silhouettes against the sky, and everywhere form the most prominent feature in its varied landscape. Neither time nor the hand of man can ever destroy this eternal beauty of nature. For so much has the traveller to Greece to-day to reward him—his surroundings are the same as they were in the great days of antiquity.

But what of the actual conditions of travel in Greece to-day? We shall see that for the most part these are primitive in the extreme, and that aside from the larger towns it is very difficult to visit most of the historic sites. In the first place, there are very few railways in Greece, and these connect only the larger cities. Thus there is a line southward from Athens into the Peloponnesus by way of Megara and Corinth. At the latter town, situated near the western end of the Corinthian Canal and four or five miles from the ancient city, which is now in process of excavation, one branch runs westward to Patras at the western end of the Corinthian Gulf, the port of entry for passengers from Italy and the western Mediterranean, and thence southwestward to Olympia; another branch runs southward, passing the sites of Mycenæ and Tiryns on the way, and winds among the hills of Arcadia to the town of Tripolitza, situated in the neighborhood of three ancient sites. Another line runs from Athens *via* Kephissia to Laurion, near Cape Sunium at the southwestern

corner of Attica. Still another runs northward from Athens *via* Thebes to Larissa, the capital of Thessaly, passing very near Thermopylæ and Lamia on the way. From Larissa, since my latest visit to Greece, this line has been extended through the Vale of Tempe, connecting the Greek line with those of Central Europe *via* Saloniki, Nisch, and Belgrade. Until a very short time ago this link from Larissa to Saloniki had not been completed and Greece was to all intents and purposes an island and not a peninsula of Southern Europe, for the only way to approach it was by water. Now it is possible to journey by rail without change of cars all the way from Calais to Athens in fewer than seventy hours. Lovers of the romantic can hardly imagine such a realistic inroad into their fancy as the whistle of an engine awakening the echoes of the solitudes of Tempe and the fields of Pieria, the earliest home of European song. On the other hand, however, the practical advantages of the railway are great, and now this famous region, heretofore known only to scholars through literature, is easily accessible to every traveller. Still another railway runs from Volo, the modern port of Thessaly on the Pagasæan Gulf, so famed in the story of the Argonauts, to Larissa, and a further extension westward ends at Kalabaka, the picturesque village in the neighborhood of the monasteries of Meteora, which are perched like eagles' nests on the tops of pinnacles of rocks forming spurs to the great range of the Cambunians. A very short railway connects Mesolonghi, the town on the northwestern coast of the Corinthian Gulf where Byron died, with Agrinion, the capital of the province of Ætolia. This line, however, is not connected with the two main systems already described as radiating from Athens. Thus, despite the fact that all the larger modern cities—Patras, Corinth, Tripolitza, Athens, Piræus, Thebes, Volo—are situated on railways, many of the famous old sites which are still inhabited—Sparta, Epidaurus, Delphi, Marathon, etc.,—can be reached only by carriage or on foot. A few towns of importance can also be reached by boat—Argos, Nauplia, Corinth, Itea (for Delphi), Mesolonghi (for Agrinion), Patras—although the Greek coasting vessels cannot be recommended as yet for night travel.

Travelling in the interior of Greece is a very different matter

from what it is in Italy or Spain. Here it has never been exploited, as one soon learns if he essays to visit some far-away site or to climb some memory-haunted mountain. The physical conditions of travel—roads, modes of conveyance, food, night-quarters, in fact, all that makes it a delight elsewhere—are very primitive here. Greece is certainly no place for the tourist whose comfort depends upon the satisfaction of creature wants. At the end of a weary day's journey on foot or on an *allogo* or country horse—thus appropriately named because of his 'unreasonableness'—no appetizing *table d'hôte* awaits him, no vision of restful slumber between clean white sheets buoys up his drooping spirits. He is destined to satisfy his hunger either on what he may have brought with him, or to depend upon the truly Spartan fare which the village *magasi* or store may offer. Here there are no restaurants like the *trattorie* of Italian villages, nor comfortable inns like the *auberges* of French towns. About the only things procurable are eggs and cheese, gritty bread and goats' milk or resined wine. Often there are no eggs, and one has to be content with bread and olives and wine, although it is a long time before one can manage the acrid flavor of the latter, caused by the fact that it is preserved with resin. Sometimes a fowl or even a lamb can be obtained, but these occasions are rare, as the peasants seldom eat flesh. Greece, of course, is to-day, as in antiquity, a pastoral and not an agricultural country, and consequently has to import a large part of its food supplies. The Entente blockade at the time of the expulsion of King Constantine quickly brought the Greeks to terms, for their accumulated supplies soon ran out. In the small hamlets of the interior poverty is most apparent. When one enters the village there and calls for this or that, the answer generally is *θὲν ἔχει*—"there is none", whose iteration inspired one of my fellow-travellers to say facetiously that these two words should be the motto of modern Hellas.

If food is poor and hard to get, the arrangements for a night's lodging are still worse. Of course, in all the larger towns there are European hotels and in some of the smaller ones there are fair taverns (*ξενοδοχεῖα*). But, in the hamlets, there are rarely any public hostelries, and one has to turn for hospitality to the house

of the village mayor, or to that of the physician or priest. The hospitality offered is not always a guarantee of tranquillity. Beds, for the most part, are a curiosity and one must sleep on the floor wrapped in blankets no strangers to vermin. In the ordinary inns one never takes a room, but only a bed, and the distinction very soon comes home to you, when you find during the night that a half-dozen or more weary travellers have come into the same room, where privacy is out of the question. In a villager's house one is likely to have to roll himself in a blanket in the midst of the family, or even of the animals, and next morning to make his toilet in the presence of many curious eyes. All such publicity and inconvenience could be endured if one could only peacefully sleep. But most of the night is spent in a ceaseless battle with the small though powerful enemy against whom there is hope of neither success nor redress. Even the god of sleep himself, with the balm of poppies and sleepy mandragora, could scarcely withstand such legions. One's first experience in a contest so unequal is never forgotten, although the struggle may be renewed each successive night. Whether the Greeks of old were annoyed as their descendants are, I do not know. Ancient literature contains many instances of sacrifices offered to certain of the gods to avert scourges of flies, a common plague of low-lying villages, but none, so far as I am aware, to propitiate their more evil cousins.

The corresponding pests of outdoor travel are the ferocious dogs which one meets everywhere in the country parts. A chorus of snarling yelps is the usual greeting received on entering a Greek village. I remember, on one occasion, being actually driven out of the hamlet of Kalpaki, on the site of ancient Orchomenos in Arcadia, by a pack of these dogs which made it impossible for me and my companions to dismount, and necessitated a further ride of a half-dozen miles in the early evening before we found a more hospitable reception. To frighten them off, it is generally sufficient to stoop as if to pick up stones. This method is mentioned in one of the *Idylls* of Theocritus as the one by which Heracles, when approaching the stables of Augeas, drove off a pack of yelping curs. It is so often employed nowadays that it is humorously said that no dog is ever

seen inside a Greek church, because of the terror inspired in them by the constant bowing of the congregation in the course of their devotions. If they cannot be frightened off in this way, one should follow the ancient example of Odysseus, who, when set upon by his swineherd's dogs, "craftily sat down upon the ground and threw away his weapons, until Eumæus with shouts and stones drove them off". I have successfully tried this method when beset in a lonely field. The dogs formed a circle around me, finally grew tired of barking, and left. Aristotle must have done some country walking, for in a passage in the *Rhetoric* he mentions that dogs never bite those who are seated. If one should run away from them it is not difficult to say what would happen, for these dogs are really savage and dangerous. I shall give only one example of their ferocity. Before my arrival in Old Corinth to take part in the American excavations there, a child of five years was killed and devoured one evening by a strange dog which had wandered into the enclosed yard of the house in which I lived. This is no isolated case.

These dogs are supposed to be descended from the old Molossian breed of Epirus, and look very much like a cross between a mastiff and a shepherd dog. They are of low intelligence, and, being rarely fed, forage for themselves. Consequently they generally appear as ravenous as wolves. The peasants never fondle them, nor is it well for a stranger to attempt to do so, even when they seem to be friendly. One is certain to be bitten if he tries to pat them. Of course, in the country parts they are of great assistance to the shepherds and goatherds in guarding their flocks of sheep and goats against robbers and wolves. Their masters seem pleased at the fear which they inspire in wayfarers, and if one is beset by them on coming unexpectedly into the neighborhood of a flock of sheep or goats, the herdsman will often unconcernedly lean on his staff and do nothing to call them off. It is dangerous to injure them, as it is certain to arouse the enmity of the owner. This was also true in antiquity, as the myth recounted of Hippocoön by Pausanias shows. Ceneus, the companion of Heracles, while visiting Sparta, killed a dog which attacked him, and in consequence the son of the owner Hippocoön beat him to death with clubs. A feud arose be-

tween the owner and Heracles, which ended in the death of the former together with his whole family. In antiquity we hear very little of dogs being treated as pets. In fact, the old Greeks must have regarded them in much the same way as their descendants do now,—as useful animals, but nothing more. The story in the *Odyssey* of the old dog Argo recognizing with friendliness his master Odysseus, who had returned home after an absence of twenty years, is almost unique in Greek literature.

To offset this account of the discomforts of travel in the interior of Greece, I should not forget to speak of the friendly hospitality of the ordinary village peasant, who will lavish his little all on the entertainment of a stranger. Sometimes, however, this unrestrained hospitality is carried to such an extreme that the results defeat the good intentions of the host. I well remember such an instance during one of my mountain excursions. Our party had reached the tiny village of Anavryti situated some twenty-five hundred feet up the lower slope of Mount Taygetus, the imposing mountain wall opposite Sparta, whose length of seventy miles encloses "hollow Lacedæmon" on its western side. Our approach at nightfall was heralded, as usual, by a pack of howling dogs. With difficulty we made our way through the village to the house of a Greek to whom we had a letter of introduction, which had been given us by the proprietor of the inn at Sparta where we had spent the preceding night. He kept a *magasi* and gave us a hearty welcome, proud to receive such distinguished guests. He assigned for our use a room over his store. As very few travellers ever reach this sequestered hamlet, our arrival was an event of importance. A crowd of men, women and children had followed us through the main street; and as soon as we were ensconced in our quarters, it seemed as if the entire town had heard of our arrival and were eager to see us. In fact, so many of the men—the women had discreetly remained below—came up to greet us that our host at last had to send for the village policeman to clear most of them out. For hours after supper we had no opportunity to go to bed, and so had to make the best of it by trying our bad Romaic on our guests. We naturally asked questions about the ancient glory

of Sparta, but, much to our surprise, very soon found that not one of them had ever heard of Leonidas. Finally, one man with great pride brought in his little son, who had gone to school in Sparta, and who could tell us about Spartan history. In fact, the boy quite put his elders to shame, although their manifest pride in their village scholar made them unmindful of their own defects. Such ignorance, however, is characteristic of the Greek peasant, who, I think, is far behind his Italian brother in that respect. After the novelty of our presence had worn off, our visitors became more at ease, and favored us with the usual diversion of song, the performers screwing up their faces in a most unaccountable manner, as if suffering great pain. After an hour of this new mode of torture, our lack of appreciation was happily interpreted as weariness, and soon the reception was over, the room was cleared, and we stretched ourselves out upon the floor to try to get some rest in preparation for the four-o'clock start up the mountain next morning.

Enough has been said about Greek travel to indicate that a journey into the more remote parts of the country must be one primarily of sentiment. One must see with the eye of imagination quite as much as with the eye of sense, or such a journey will have been in vain. He must be imbued with the magic spell of the story and the poetry of Hellas and feel with the poet that—

“Where'er we tread 't is haunted holy ground.”

If we can transport ourselves in fancy to those “realms of gold”, we shall soon find that there is romance in—

“Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold.”

The value of travel as a means of culture has long been recognized—that it enlarges our views, deepens our sympathies, and enriches our minds. It is, in fact, a cultural equivalent of many a college course. Dr. Johnson said that “that man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona”. Horace's well-known dictum that “those who cross the sea change their skies only and not their souls” is now recognized as barely a half-truth. To an ordinary vacuous tour-

ist, perhaps, the Mediterranean is only a large body of water; but its hosts of associations evoke a tumultuous throng of images in the mind of the scholar. But the traveller to Greece, like the traveller to Italy, must have had special preparation. He must feel the glory that fills the pages of Greek story, the romance and the beauty which the magic name of Hellas recalls. Then he will experience the fascination of the poor remnants of her art and literature as well as of the richness of her scenery still in its pristine loveliness. It is a truism that the praises of her mountains and glowing skies still form the imagery of our poets. Those incomparable names of artists and poets, of thinkers and scholars, of statesmen and generals, are household words with us yet. As we look back over a period of twenty-three centuries, we are moved with wonder at the immortal achievements of those mortal men, and are still willing to emulate even where destined to fail. In no field of her many-sided activity do we feel ourselves the debtors of Greece as in that of her architecture and sculpture, in which we are still her pupils. Even during the centuries of the Italian Renaissance, which saw the gradual rebirth of Greek ideals, we find but few names to set beside those of Phidias and Praxiteles, of Ictinus and Callicrates. These men in far-away Athens reached a perfection hardly again attained by Raphael and Michelangelo, by Giotto and Bramante. Deviations from their canons of taste were merely deviations from truth, for they were content with nothing short of perfection, and they seem to have reached it. The truism, that the sculptor, like the poet is born, and not made, receives nowhere such confirmation as in Greece; for Greek artists of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. were born with temperaments exquisitely sensitive to impressions of the beautiful.

This instinctive love of the beautiful seems to have been as old as the Greek race. In Homer, Thersites is described as being despised by his companions quite as much for his ugly, misshapen body, as for his reproaches of Agamemnon. Beauty stood next to holiness in the Platonic system, goodness and beauty being almost synonymous. Such an anomaly as the good though satyr-like Socrates only aroused wonder. Cicero records how a certain physiognomist named Zopyrus, who professed to

know the characters of men from their bodies and faces, characterized the philosopher as stupid, sensual and dull. Alexander of Aphrodisias adds that when his disciples ridiculed such a judgment Socrates replied that it was true, for such had been his character before the study of philosophy had softened it. To be called *καλὸς κ'ἀγαθός* was the highest encomium Greek could pay Greek, and fair in form was as much included in the term as fair in conduct. Everything with which the Greeks had to do, from their imposing temples down to the commonest utensils of the kitchen, had the stamp of the beautiful. This love of the beautiful, together with their inherent good taste, for their first rule in art as in morals was *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, made the Greeks excellent critics, and neither exaggeration, lack of symmetry nor vagueness in line or form could exist with them. I believe that this instinctive feeling was merely the reflection of their natural environment. Here there was no extreme of climate, and not one of nature's gifts—mountain, river, plain, or island—was out of harmony with the size of the country. The clear, transparent atmosphere, which I have already noted, revealing far-away hills and valleys in distinct outline, made the Greek love the clear-cut and definite—the chief characteristics of Greek art and letters. So nature was the teacher of the Greek artist, as Lysippus himself admitted, and also of the thinker. It has been said that if the entire written history of the Greeks were lost to us, if Homer and Plato and Phidias were but names to us, there stand even yet upon the Acropolis of their greatest city sufficient visible remains of their former greatness to give unerring testimony to their intellectual and cultural primacy. The Parthenon alone, even in its evening splendor, is an epitome of the race.

One of the chief charms of Greek travel should not be ignored, even in this hasty sketch—its oneness. The traveller whose attention has been constantly distracted by the multiplicity of interests afforded by Italian travel, where the later memories of the Papal states of the Middle Ages and the republics of the Renaissance obscure the older ones of the empire of the Caesars, finds in Greece but one great and absorbing interest, that of antiquity. Everywhere here he is face to face with ancient remains, which

furnish a living touch with an almost vanished past. All the physical features which we have mentioned illuminate his knowledge of Greek letters with a clearer light. As Cicero said, "quocunque incedis, historia est". This land,—

"Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breathed around",—

to quote from Gray,—and where every plain and river and grove and fountain recall some classical legend, some poetic tale, or historic event, combines within it, as Dean Stanley has said, "a beauty and romance which is absolutely heaving with the life of ancient creeds and ideas, which are explained by it at every turn". The life of the present-day Greeks also lends its aid in no uncertain way in awakening memories of the greater past. The peasants one meets in wandering about the country constantly remind the classical scholar, by their language or manners, of ancient phrases and customs. Indeed, the tenacity with which old customs and beliefs have survived, notwithstanding the intervening centuries of foreign domination and admixture of alien blood, is astonishing. There is scarcely a canton of Greece to-day where the population has not been repeatedly driven out and replaced or even exterminated, and yet the old beliefs live on in the popular imagination.

We see this most clearly in the many religious survivals from antiquity in the guise of Christian adaptations. The first churches were built, of course, on the sites of temples, and very often the Christian saint to whom a chapel was dedicated inherited the attributes of the deity thus dispossessed. For example, St. Demetrios, the patron saint of agriculture, inherited the attributes of Demeter; Sts. Cosmo and Damiano, the mediæval patrons of medicine, those of Asclepius; St. Nicholas, to whom those in fear of shipwreck pray, those of Poseidon. The shrines of virgins and saints situated near caves and fountains recall the nymphs and the demigods who once protected such spots. And not only do some of the old gods and demigods thus live on in the popular fancy, but even actual traces of the old religion can still be found. Thus the dæmons exorcised by the priests at baptisms are a survival of Hellenistic Greek days

when "polydæmonism", or a belief in good and bad spirits, was rife. The Nereids still exist as water-fays—*νερό* being the modern word for water. Giant trees are still inhabited by guardians, surely a reminiscence of the old "Dryads", and no peasant will take shelter under them in a storm, or cut them down. When the Greek of to-day calls the thunder "Starry-axe", or says "God is raining", he is merely unconsciously expressing belief in the powers of Zeus, the old god of the heavens, just as he does in those of Poseidon, when, as on the island of Zante, he says earthquakes are caused by "God shaking his locks"—an idea as old as the first book of the *Iliad*, where the might of Zeus and his steel-blue locks is fittingly described. Not only do the shrines and attributes of some of the old deities survive, but many of the old festivals as well. The superstition of the "evil-eye", so common in Greece to-day, is an excellent illustration of the survival of old superstitions, as well as many curious practices observed at births, and marriages, and funerals. In the peasant dances on the village greens we see the germs of ancient ones. Such survivals are easier to understand when we reflect on the summary manner in which Christianity was finally established in the Eastern Roman Empire. In some of the remoter regions, however, the advent of the new religion was very slow. Thus we learn that the Mainotes of Laconia were still worshipping the old pantheon nearly five hundred years after Theodosius had proclaimed Christianity the state religion, becoming converted finally only in the reign of Basil, toward the end of the ninth century.

Travelling in Greece, then, means constantly treading the asphodel plains of antiquity, for the mediæval and modern interests count for but little in comparison with the older ones.

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